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now making to illuminate the world by new lights. We find very few annoying errors of the press, unless the Webster fashion of spelling metre "meter" may be classed among them. Had we time and space, we should like to enter our reasons for protesting against the premature attempt made in this work to force upon us the centigrade scale. From our knowledge of the great inconveniences which have resulted and will result from its partial adoption, we trust the publisher will be induced to add to the centigrade the corresponding degrees on Fahrenheit's scale in a new edition, or append to the work a table for the conversion of one scale to the other. Our strong preference is for the centigrade; but our community cannot be expected to adopt it, so long as we use English weights and measures. When these are changed for the more correct and scientific usages of France, we shall hope to see the centigrade scale displacing that familiar household God, Fahrenheit's thermometer.

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2. — *The Annual of Scientific Discovery, or Year-Book of Facts in Science and Art; exhibiting the most Important Discoveries and Improvements in Mechanics, the Useful Arts, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, &c. Together with a List of Recent Scientific Publications, a Classified List of Patents, Obituaries of Eminent Scientific Men, &c.* Edited by DAVID A. WELLS, A. M., of the Lawrence Scientific School, Cambridge, and GEORGE BLISS, JR. Boston: Gould & Lincoln. 1851. 12mo. pp. 428.

THE advancement of science, in all its departments, is so rapid nowadays, that it is a breathless undertaking to follow it, and many readers give up the chase in despair. The ordinary scientific periodicals do not aid one much in "keeping the run" of discovery and invention; each one gives an imperfect record, with reference usually to but few departments of research, and depending in a greater or less degree on what is done in its own neighborhood. We need a compendious and popular chronicle of all that is accomplished in the course of the year, adapted chiefly to the use of readers not specially devoted to science, but serving as a convenient index even for those who are. And this we understand to be the plan of the work before us, the second of its series, which, as well as its predecessor, evinces sufficient labor and care in its preparation, and serves as a very respectable monument to the scientific activity of the year which has

lately closed. The Marquis of Worcester's "Century of Inventions" is now outdone by the labor of a twelvemonth. Some of his novel conceits were not found to work as well in practice as in theory; and the same remark will probably be found applicable to a good number of the inventions described in this volume. The sketch of them here given shows rather what they are intended to accomplish, than what they have actually done. Five years' experience will doubtless cause many to be abandoned entirely, and will detract a good deal from the magnificent promises held forth by others; so that, if the matter of this volume should be revised at the end of that period, it would lose much both in bulk and pretensions. A "Year-book," as this work is modestly called, can give only the judgment of the year upon its own performances; and into that judgment hope enters as a larger element than caution. The editors, therefore, have wisely not attempted the part of criticism, for which, indeed, the abundance of their materials left them little space, with due care to prevent the book from swelling to unreasonable dimensions. A view of the failures as well as the achievements of each year is not without its use; it teaches the process of invention, by erecting beacons along the ways where there are dangers to be shunned, and by pointing out other paths which it is desirable to explore, when any one comes forward with energy and skill enough to act as pioneer.

These remarks tend to lessen the force of the only criticism which readers might be inclined to make upon the manner in which this work is edited,—that the materials for it have been collected by drawing a seine over the scientific literature of the day, allowing nothing to escape which was too big to pass through its meshes. It may be, that a diligent sifting of the matter would somewhat reduce it in bulk; but we are confident that little could be thrown out which would not be missed with regret by one or another of the numerous classes of readers. The articles are well grouped under their appropriate heads, those relating to similar subjects being placed near each other, so that the work is very convenient for reference, and affords a good *conspectus* of those fields of science and art which are now most successfully worked. When the information afforded is too brief for any purpose but that of general curiosity, there is generally a reference to some work in which fuller details can be found. On the whole, the volume is both entertaining and instructive, and may often save one the labor of turning over many other books in vain when in quest of a scrap of information. For those who would acquire a smattering of knowledge about the latest improvements in science and art, it is invaluable. A modest prefatory note by the editors, which may be considered as a review of the contents

of the volume, closes with the following remark: — “ that though the past year has not been productive of any preëminently brilliant discovery, yet quite as much has been added to the amount of human knowledge as during almost any previous year.”

3. — *Report of the Board of Trustees of the University of Rochester, on the Plan of Instruction to be pursued in the Collegiate Department.* Presented September 16, 1850. Rochester: Sage & Brother. 8vo. pp. 50.

Nothing is more characteristic of our countrymen, and nothing more honorable to them, than the readiness with which they furnish large endowments to the higher seminaries of learning. The States, the different religious denominations, city and country, contend with each other in noble rivalry for this great purpose. The money is usually obtained by private contributions, individuals being as remarkable for their liberality in this respect as legislative bodies are for their parsimony. And one great good results from this fact,—that the institutions thus founded or assisted come under the control and management of a private body of trustees, and not of the legislature or the State, so that the revulsions and storms of the political world pass over them harmlessly, and the offices in them are not made the prizes of political ambition and effort. They are not shielded from sectarian influences to an equal extent, it is true; but each college or endowed academy which has any sectarian character, is the undoubted property or foster-child of some one sect, whose right over it consequently cannot be disputed, so that the jealousy or rivalry of other sects cannot injure it. Its religious character is determined by its founders, and cannot be subsequently affected, except by future dissension in the sect to which those founders belong.

The University of Rochester, to which the report now before us relates, is an institution just created, as we understand, by the liberality of members of the Baptist denomination in New York. Having liberally endowed it, a question necessarily came before them, which has been much debated for many years in this country, — what plan of instruction should be adopted in the collegiate department. Should the new institution be thrown open to all who might choose to enter it, there to pursue studies of their own selection as long as they saw fit, or should it be made a place for a thorough course of *liberal* education, to be marked out before-